

SITE COORDINATOR MANUAL

ARIZONA COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

...expanding access and increasing success in postsecondary education for Arizonans

Dear Site Coordinator.

Congratulations on your choice to become a College & Career Goal Arizona school by participating in the Arizona College Application Campaign (AzCAC). AzCAC is part of a national initiative, the American College Application Campaign, to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose of this initiative is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits a viable postsecondary application with support from counselors, teachers, access groups, college or university representatives, and other volunteers. Participation in College Goal FAF\$A and FAF\$A completion is encouraged to help support students as they transition from high school to postsecondary education.

In the following pages, you will find some helpful documents, best practices, and other examples that you may use to plan and execute your event. Each high school is unique, and as such, each AzCAC event will also be unique. We hope you find some good ideas that will work best for your school, your students, and your efforts to create a college-going culture within your student body.

We wish you a very successful Arizona College Application Campaign event!

Warmest Regards,

The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education

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AzCAC Site Coordinator Manual

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Other valuable resources, trainings, and AzCAC materials can be found at https://collegegoal.az.gov/coordinator-resources.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Arizona College Application Campaign!

Background: The ACAC initiative began in 2005, in a single GEAR UP North Carolina high school in Chatham County. By 2014, the American College Application Campaign had participation in all 50 states; in 2018 over 8,000 college applications nationwide were submitted by seniors participating in their state's college application campaign.

Arizona College Application Campaign: In 2013, the public universities in Arizona asked the Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education (ACPE), to take on this program for the state. ACPE ran a pilot that same year with eight Title I high schools with a high need for college readiness planning. Since then, we have continued to grow and AzCAC is now, along with College Goal FAF\$A and FAF\$A Finish Line, a thriving part of the College and Career Goal Arizona (C2GA) program. There is no participation fee or cost to join AzCAC although success is heavily reliant on school buy-in and the ability for the site coordinator to absorb the hours required for planning and implementation.

College and Career Goal Arizona

www.collegegoal.az.gov

www.facebook.com/collegegoalarizona • www.twitter.com/collegegoalaz

American College Application Campaign

https://equityinlearning.act.org/acac

www.facebook.com/americancac • www.twitter.com/american_cac

SECTION 2: SITE COORDINATOR PLANNING

Joining Arizona College Application Campaign

Arizona has a robust program across the state. Participating schools are encouraged to hold their College Application Campaign in November; however, some have found success hosting their event earlier in the fall. Many schools have found success with one week for activities promoting the event followed by several days used for completing applications. The ACPE encourages all site coordinators to plan their event in a way that will work with their individual school demographics, geography, and resources. Part of the success of AzCAC is that coordinators have the flexibility to tailor the program to best serve their school schedule, culture, and student population.

Site Coordinator Role and Responsibility

Each high school will identify a site coordinator, typically a high school counselor or assistant principal, who will be responsible for implementing the program at their school. ACPE will provide planning resources that participating high schools can use to customize for their events. The site coordinator will need to contact postsecondary institutions and college access groups to recruit professionals for their events. In addition to higher education professionals and college access program staff, you will need volunteers. Volunteers are a critical component of any school's College Application Campaign event. ACPE provides training modules for volunteers that site coordinators may use. A good pool of volunteers to draw from for your event are teachers or school staff, parents/PTA, alumni students, community groups, or local businesses.

School Buy-In

Based on feedback from previous AzCAC campaigns, the schools with the most success during Arizona College Application Campaign had strong support and buy-in from the administration, as well as support from the school district. Engaging teachers and other staff to help with pre-event activities and application events also created a more successful event. Using student government representatives or other peer-to-peer mentors throughout the process was reported as very positive from several school sites.

Best Practices

To have a successful College Application Campaign event, schools need:

- ✓ A school team comprised of counselors, staff and community members with support from the school administration and district.
- ✓ Event(s) scheduled during the school day for all seniors to complete and submit at least one application for a postsecondary experience. Vocational/trade schools and military service are considered postsecondary experiences. Schools should focus on engaging first-generation students, low-income students, and students who may otherwise not consider applying to college. Computer rooms or labs must be used for this program as most colleges/universities only offer their applications online.
- ✓ Support from your team to help ensure that students are prepared. Have them encourage seniors to complete a Pre-Application Worksheet (available on our website

- under "Coordinator Resources") to help them collect required information for submitting an application.
- ✓ Involvement of local community, families, and others through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising campaigns and marketing efforts.
- ✓ Ensure the ACPE has accurate Campaign dates for your school; we maintain an online calendar used by colleges and universities to schedule personnel. If there are date changes, please update the Commission.
- ✓ Execute an energy-filled event where students bring their Pre-Application Worksheet, apply for at least one postsecondary education experience, and complete the online Student Exit Report (SER).
- ✓ Some schools are able to provide incentives for completing an application which brings excitement to their events. Some ideas include homecoming or prom tickets, tickets to sporting events, yearbooks, or swag donated from colleges/universities.
- ✓ A make-up day for students who either were absent or need more time to complete their application.
- ✓ A Follow-up with students after the event to ensure submitted applications are complete: transcripts, college entrance exam scores, application fees, etc.
- ✓ Reminding students to submit a FAFSA, either through College Goal FAF\$A programs at your high school or nearby sites.
- ✓ Creating a college-going culture within the school through a variety of approaches some suggestions are included in this guide.

Implementing the Arizona College Application Campaign

State Coordinator

The state coordinator for Arizona College Application Campaign is Amanda Schabacker at the Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education. Contact her at aschabacker@azhighered.gov or 602-542-7234.

Technical Assistance & Training

Webinars/training modules that provide assistance and information on best practices will be available online. Our website, www.collegegoal.az.gov, will be updated with additional information as it becomes available.

Branding

College Application Campaign is not a school-specific program, although implementation is done at a school level. This is a statewide program working under a national umbrella. ACPE will provide each participating site with promotional materials. As schools plan and execute their own advertising, marketing, and communication we encourage you to use the College Application Campaign logo in addition to school or district logos.

Building a Team

College Application Campaign events are collaborative. Engaging partners from the local community is highly recommended. Leveraging partnerships with community organizations and businesses, PTA and other parent/family groups, student clubs or honor societies, teachers, college readiness personnel within your school/district that serve your area will provide much needed volunteer hours, increase success, and generate additional ideas. Keep in mind when

planning for your event, that you should follow all district and school policies regarding non-school personnel visiting, volunteering, or otherwise assisting with your school's program.

Planning with your Team

As outlined above, a team comprised of a variety of stakeholders is extremely effective in creating support and buy-in for your school's event.

Some of the key topics that should be discussed with your team are:

- Day(s), time(s), and location(s) of your event(s)
 - o November is Arizona's official College Application Month
- Responsibilities of the team
- Communication strategy
 - Students, parents, school staff, community
 - Marketing, phone, email blasts, letters, press releases, and social media
 - Mayoral and/or District proclamation
- Ensure students and equipment is ready for your College Application Event
 - Students should know their Legal name / Social Security Number
 - o Dual Enrollment
 - IT: Ensure browsers are updated and no application sites are blocked by firewalls
 - Promote application events to students (preparation / expectations)
- Creating or enhancing a college-going culture prior to your event
 - College and University posters in hallways / Door decorating contest
 - Assembly/kickoff event
 - School-wide awareness activities
 - o Peer-to-peer assistance (SBO's, etc.)
- Recruiting volunteers for the initiative
 - Make sure all volunteers/ higher education professionals are aware of District/school rules regarding visitors
 - Encourage non-higher education professionals to view the Volunteer Training Modules on the C2GA website
 - Have assignments ready for volunteers at events
- Evaluation and data collection
 - Have students complete the Student Exit Summary Report
 - Use the data provided by the ACPE for follow-up and program evaluation
- Application follow-up ensure the college and financial aid processes have been completed

After your College Application Campaign event, your school team should meet to debrief on the successes and challenges of the current year's event – feel free to use the topics above to guide the discussion. The debrief meeting should occur as close to the conclusion of your school's event as possible. By quickly assessing what worked and what areas need improvement, your school team can get a jump-start on planning for next year's events.

SECTION 3: EVENT PLANNING

Planning Methods

There are many different ways to plan your AzCAC event. You may need to tweak these ideas, or come up with your own, for AzCAC to be successful in your school. The following are suggestions only, please select the program model that will work for your school.

The Advisory/Core Class Method

The most popular method for Arizona College Application Campaign is to use core classes—usually English or Government —and bring those students to the computer lab a class at a time to participate in AzCAC. This is the easiest to plan, but you may run into some resistance from teachers who are displeased with yet another event taking up their instruction time.

The By Institution Method

On this day you will have reserved computer labs and classrooms for your seniors. You will break the day up by institutions. For example, on November 15, 2017 from 8:00-9:30am the labs will be used for students applying to In-State Institutions, from 10:00-11:30am students will be applying to Out-of-State Institutions, and so on and so forth. Counselors will excuse students applying to that institution on a designated day/time. This type of method will be the easiest for your school to schedule college reps and it will maximize their time

The District Method

This method is most successful with rural districts. You may only need one or two days for your event if you have a small number of seniors enrolled. Using a district-wide team, which includes outreach personnel and other available district officials. These participating individuals will provide support and encouragement to your students when university/college reps might not be available to participate in the event. This can maximize your ability to reach the seniors at all district schools. For your students who are not applying to a four-year college/university or community colleges, you can plan part of your event around vocational and technical/trade schools and military service as these are all considered to be a postsecondary experience and a part of the event. Be sure to try to include representatives from these areas for your students as well.

Other Options

None of these options are required, each school is different, different student body demographics, different geographic hurdles, and different levels of available resources and volunteers. **Find a method that will work for your school**, and make tweaks along the way. Your second, third, and fourth years participating in AzCAC will probably be more successful as your site team figures out the method that will work the best to meet the needs of your students.

Schedule of Events

To keep your school team, administration, teachers, other staff, and volunteers on the same page throughout your College Application Campaign event, we recommend printing out and distributing a detailed schedule of what will be happening where and when in your school. Here are a few examples from previous years.

Here is a step-by-step plan created by past Site Coordinator, Renell Heister, former Head Counselor at Winslow High School. This process was found to be successful:

- 1. Scheduled one day event
- Designed school day around AzCAC
 - 9th graders NAVIT/NPC programs
 - 10th graders AzMERIT math or Aspire
 - 11th graders ASVAB
- 3. Recruited community volunteers and college reps
- 4. Promoted event: local papers, parent newsletters, banners/posters, Facebook, Twitter
- 5. Prepared seniors ahead of time via ECAPS
 - Created MEID for community colleges
 - Completed pre-application data collection sheet (SSN's are imperative)
 - Researched colleges, admission criteria, majors, etc. students' listed their top 3
- 6. Grouped students into 8 computer labs based on college choices; provided transcripts and fee waiver forms
- 7. Provided steps/protocols and college application links to facilitators; training meeting at 7:00 AM day of
- 8. Asked facilitators (teachers, community members, college reps) to evaluate the event; made changes the next year
- 9. Improvement!
 - 2013: Just over 70% of seniors submitted an application
 - 2014: More than 90% of seniors submitted a college application during AzCAC

Here is a step-by-step plan created by past Site Coordinator, Dolores Ramirez, Phoenix Union High School District. This process was also found to be successful:

- 1. Identify and engage stakeholders:
 - Principal, faculty, staff, students, community businesses, community support organizations
- 2. Planning and Preparation:
 - Logistics book computer labs, adjust schedules
 - People guests/motivational speakers, admission staff, volunteers, faculty and student government or student interest groups (CHS used a ratio of 1 adult for every 5 students)
 - Students senior assemblies, increase awareness of postsecondary options, learn college-going vocabulary, prep sheets
- 3. Resources and Implementation:
 - Talk to your peers and use readily available local resources
 - Online resources
 - Admissions staff and volunteers local Vocational Schools, community colleges, public and private universities, parents, high school alumni, Be a Leader, GEAR UP, AzCAN, local churches, civic clubs, etc.
 - Contact local businesses and/or colleges and universities for incentives for your students

Volunteers

How Volunteers can Support the College Application Campaign

Although familiarity with the college application process is a plus, it is not required for someone to fulfill a useful task and have a meaningful volunteer experience at a participating Campaign high school. Here are a few ideas for utilizing volunteers:

- Posting directional signs in the school for the event. Good signage is key to reminding students of the event and getting them to the right place.
- Greeting students as they arrive to the computer lab.
- Monitoring printers to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.
- Sharing personal college experiences with students.
- Reminding each student to complete the online student report at the end of their application.
- Handing out materials to students after they complete their college application(s) such as a sticker or wristband, a "I Applied...What's Next?" handout, and a reminder to attend the College Goal FAF\$A event held in your area.
- Congratulating each student on applying to college and encouraging students to share their experience with other classmates.

Preparing your Volunteers

Having enthusiastic, trained volunteers assist with your event will make both the planning and implementation processes go much smoother. Here are a few ideas for recruiting and designating your volunteer team.

- Collect names and contact information (email, phone number) as well as the dates/times each volunteer is available.
- Ask volunteers questions to determine their area of expertise in helping with your event. A bi-lingual volunteer may be useful for your school's demographic.
- Make sure volunteers have met any school requirements to be allowed on campus, make nametags or walk them through a school sign-in process.
- Finalize a list of volunteers and their assignments
- Send out a schedule and updates or reminders to your volunteers with specific instructions on the date, time, and their designated tasks; encourage volunteers to wear college gear (shirt, hat, etc.) while they are in your school.
- After your event is complete, send each volunteer a note of appreciation for their time and effort in supporting a successful AzCAC event at your school. There is a sample Thank You letter for volunteers included in the Appendix.

SECTION 4: EVENT ACTIVITES

Preparing and Implementing a College Application Event

Pre-event Activities: Creating a College-Going Culture and Getting Students Prepared

There are several activities that schools participating in the College Application Campaign program can do prior to the event in order to prepare students for the event and to generate enthusiasm and support for the program, both within the high school and in the community. This section of the manual focuses on pre-event activities that high school site coordinators are encouraged to utilize as they plan for the program.

- Pre-Application Worksheet for students
 - Have students gather all pertinent information for applications such as social security numbers, transcripts, SAT/ACT test scores, etc.
- Arizona College Application Campaign Folder for Students
 - o Create a folder for students to keep all of their college information together
- Market Events
 - Information Letters
 - School Announcements
 - Phone or Email Blast
 - Sample Press Release
 - Mayoral Proclamation
 - School District Proclamation
- Other Pre-Event Activities (spirit week, posters, college gear day, door decorating contest, etc.)

During your College Application Event

You have completed all of the planning for your College Application Campaign event and due to the pre-event activities, your students are prepared and the community is engaged in this exciting initiative! Use these activities and resources to help make your event a success!

- Assign volunteer tasks
- Provide instruction to students
- Ensure students have completed the Student Exit Report (SER)
- o "I Applied...What's Next?" handout for students
- Reminders for College Goal FAF\$A Event
- Create a fun way to celebrate your school
 - Create an "I applied" wall
 - Raffle Prizes

After your College Application Program

Congratulations! You have successfully implemented a College Application Campaign program for your students and started them on the pathway to enrolling in a postsecondary experience. After the event, you'll want to:

- Send volunteer thank you letters
- Post-Event Press Releases
- Share your success on social media and tag us in your posts

Promoting a College-Going Culture

"I Applied" Wall

Use a large wall in a common area and have students write their name on small pennants with the name of the school to which they applied (you can download this file from our website, https://collegegoal.az.gov/coordinator-resources). As the week progresses watch the wall fill up and be a compelling visual of how many applications are being submitted by your students.



Door Decorating Contests

Encourage teachers and other staff, with help from their students, to decorate their classroom or office doors to reflect the colleges and/or universities where they earned a degree. Have contests between classrooms with prizes or bragging rights for the winners!

"How Did I Get Here?" posters

College and Career Goal Arizona has printed large "How Did I Get Here?" posters (11"x17") that teachers can add the name or logo of their alma mater and hang in their classrooms to prompt discussions about college with students. These posters are available to order at no charge from the Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education.



Other Ideas to Promote a College-Going Culture

Provide pre-college application activities for *all students* in your school prior to and during Arizona College Application Campaign. You may organize workshops or information nights for parents and families, discuss AzCAC during homeroom/advisory with students, or during the actual College Application Week. You can find templates for some of these activities included in the Appendix. Some examples include:

- **9**th **grade:** Decision making, learning styles, study habits, HS transcript and academic planning, connection between school and careers, how to qualify for a scholarship, colleges and the degrees offered, college admission criteria, etc.
- 10th grade: Progress check, extracurricular activities, earning college credit during high school (AP, IB, Dual Enrollment), world of work, college costs and ways to pay, college visits (online), PSAT, etc.
- **11**th **grade:** Money management, finding scholarships, admission process, college entrance tests, preparing to apply, writing personal statements and essays, etc.
- 12th graders who have already applied to college or joined the military: FSA ID,
 FAFSA application, searching and applying for scholarships, resume writing and job
 hunting, helping other students complete and submit college applications in a peer-topeer model.
- The Federal Student Aid Office at the US Department of Education has grade-level checklists and research tools to help students become academically and financially prepared for postsecondary education here. These checklists and resources can be utilized in classroom preparation activities: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists

Incorporate College Application Activities into the Classroom

- Ask English teachers if they would be willing to coordinate a writing workshop for
 personal statements or essays, or ask them to assign a college application essay,
 personal statement, or a scholarship essay as homework prior to the event. Students
 should be able to research the prompts on the college applications or scholarship
 applications to which they are interested in applying. Teachers can go over correct
 grammar and language to use on a college application. Additionally, stress the
 importance of using appropriate email addresses.
- See if Civics or Social Studies teachers will lead a college match lesson where students research and identify schools that are a good fit to their academic records and goals. Educated citizens are more likely to vote and be engaged in their communities.
- Ask Math teachers if they would be willing to do a lesson on calculating financial need and repayment options. A critical component to a student being an informed consumer is having an understanding about the cost of attending college, the financial aid that is available, and what, if any, repayment students will need to do. Investigating average salaries of students who graduate with their major is an important piece of the research.

Guest Speaker / Assembly

Engage a local community leader, district superintendent, or a recent graduate from your high school who is attending college to speak with your senior class about the importance of attending college, and the importance of applying early. Ask the speaker to encourage students to take advantage of the College Application Campaign event that will be hosted at their school to complete these processes.

Using a performing group from your high school, or inviting a community or college group to perform, can also bring excitement to this event.

SECTION 5: DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING

The ACPE has created a short 5-minute online survey, the Student Exit Report (SER), for students to complete prior to leaving the computer lab. From this student report you will know how many applications students filed both before and during the AzCAC event. This report will also summarize the percentage of your students going to public universities, community colleges, out-of-state schools, etc. This is valuable data you will want to share with your administration, community, stakeholders, school board, etc.

The goal is to have 100% of participating seniors submit their student report data. Students should complete a SER after each event they attend.

The ACPE will provide incentives for students who complete the SER. We also encourage schools to provide their own incentives for students to participate in the College Application Campaign and complete the SER. **Your data will only be as good as what the students deliver.** In past years some site coordinators received this feedback from only 58% of their seniors, 42% of outcomes were unknown because the report was not completed.

Your school or district IT professional should test the student report link (SurveyMonkey) the week before the event to ensure there are no firewall or other blocked website issues for Survey Monkey or college/university websites. Bookmarking websites on each computer such as the student report, college or university application pages, etc., can help your event be successful.

SECTION 6: PR AND MEDIA

As a state-wide campaign we are able to gain much more public support and momentum through strategic and unified public relations, press releases, and communication. Coordination of local and state-wide media will generate the support and awareness from government, businesses and the community. Prior to any media efforts, please double check your school or district media policy and contact a school or district public relations professional, if applicable. **Please always abide by school and district media and social media policies**.

Press Release/ Media Coverage

Contact your local media to inform them of your College Application event. If school policy allows, invite them to be a part of your program. Media coverage will help students, families, and the community recognize the importance of this program for your school and students. If your school or district has a public relations specialist, utilize them to help your press release get through the proper channels.

Social Media

Social media is one of the easiest and quickest ways to share information, photos, and updates on your Arizona College Application Campaign event. Please see the following pages for some basic instructions on how to use social media, examples of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts, and the College and Career Goal Arizona hashtags, #AzCAC, #C2GA and #I Applied. For media-savvy schools or districts, utilizing your own high school hashtags can help further brand your AzCAC program. Follow us at www.facebook.com/collegegoalarizona or www.twitter.com/collegegoalAZ.

Photo/Video Release Forms

If you are planning to use students' likenesses via photo or video images, please have them or their guardian sign a photo release form and keep it on file. We have included examples of a Photo/Video Release form in the Appendix. Many districts have specific forms or processes for a video/photo/media release; always follow your school or district policy first.

Arizona Governor Declaration

For the past seven years, Governor Ducey has declared the month of November College Application Campaign Month. The declaration request is submitted by the Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education and can be found in the Site Coordinator resources page of the College Goal Arizona website.

Arizona College Application Campaign Proclamations

A mayoral proclamation for your school's event is a wonderful complement to the Governor's proclamation. If there are multiple schools or districts within your city limits implementing an event, be sure to coordinate with them so the proclamation is accurate and reflects all participating schools. An example can be found in the appendix.

School District Proclamation

Discussing Arizona College Application Campaign at school board meetings in September, October, and November will bring a lot of publicity to your events and likely garner more support from the district. Students may attend the meetings and present short speeches on the importance of college in their lives, and how having this program during the school day has helped understand better the timing and necessity of applications and financial aid. Ask your district office or liaison what protocol must be taken to get on the agenda for a School Board meeting. Your school district foundation may be able to set aside some funds to help high-need students pay college application fees, where necessary.

Additionally, a district-wide proclamation of Arizona College Application Campaign can spread awareness throughout the community and the elementary and junior high/middle schools. A School District proclamation can have a district logo, high school logos, and/or the Arizona College Application Campaign logo, or be printed on official district letterhead or proclamation letterhead, if available. An example can be found in the appendix.

SECTION 7: AZCAC CHECKLISTS

Week Before AzCAC Checklist:

| | Ensure the Student Exit Report (SER) website, SurveyMonkey, is bookmarked and accessible at each computer station. | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | Make sure each computer station (or AzCAC student folder) has a copy of the websites for Arizona's public universities, community colleges, and other postsecondary institutions AND instructions for the students to follow. | |
| | Provide each student with an unofficial copy of their transcript and ACT/SAT scores (include in AzCAC folders, if applicable). | |
| | Where applicable, pre-sign Arizona Public University Application Fee Waivers for eligible students. | |
| | Confirm all promotional materials have arrived (banner is hung, students and wristbands ready to distribute to students, other promotional or donated materials ready for giveaways) | |
| | Remind teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff of the schedule for AzCAC and all planned activities. Ask them to wear college clothing during the days of the event. | |
| Day of AzCAC Event Checklist: | | |
| | Make sure all staff, students, college personnel, and volunteers have copies of the instructions for students to follow for the day. | |
| | Keep phone numbers for administration, school district, IT, ACPE, admissions, staff on hand to quickly problem solve any application questions or computer issues. | |
| | Welcome your volunteer and resource personnel. Confirm assignments. | |
| | Confirm students complete the Student Exit Report (SER) | |
| AzCAC Event Follow-Up Checklist: | | |
| | Provide make-up opportunities for students who were absent or who did not complete an application. | |
| | Share the data and infographic within your school, district, and community. Utilize a school or district public relations or media professional to craft and share a post-event press release (a template for this is included in the Appendix). | |
| | Send Thank You notes to all volunteers and school personnel (template found in Appendix). | |
| | Meet with your planning team to discuss what went well, what areas can be improved, and make some notes and preliminary planning for next year's event! The sooner after your AzCAC event the better for this debrief meeting, while everything is still fresh in your mind. | |